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CANADIAN FILM INSTITUTE BULLETIN



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MARY FIELD

Mary Field, pioneer and international authority on films and television for children, is at present in Canada. Her tour, from Halifax to Vancouver, sponsored by the Canadian Film Institute, with the assistance of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board and the United Kingdom Information Service, reads like a regal schedule in which she will address (in English and French) public meetings, speak on radio and television, attend conferences, civic and private receptions and other gatherings. She brings with an elder statesman's wisdom, experience and practicality, advice and knowledge based on a wide yet deep acquaintance with children's films in many parts of the world.

We particularly look forward to Miss Field's participation in the initiation of the Canadian Centre of Films for Children at a meeting in Toronto on May 2nd. Following an address by Miss Field, resolutions outlining the framework of the Canadian Centre of Films for Children will be presented for ratification by representatives of national, regional and local organizations, and a provisional Management Committee will be elected.

BIOGRAPHY

Mary Field came to work in films almost by accident. "If I had any thought of a career it was of writing", she once said. Born at Wimbledon, London, in 1896, she was educated at Surbiton High School and at Bedford College for Women in London University, where she took her M.A. with distinction in Imperial History. Her thesis was on: "Newfoundland fisheries in the 16th and 17th centuries".

It so happened that her Professor received a batch of films on Commonwealth subjects to check for accuracy, and passed on the job to her. Thus began her association with British Instructional Films. With characteristic thoroughness she learned her subject well, working in all areas from continuity girl to director with distinguished directors like Anthony Asquith. Although interested in the feature film — in 1931 she directed a feature comedy of London life, *STRICTLY BUSINESS* — she concentrated mainly on educational and documentary films: "They cost so little you can experiment", she said. In the late 20's, working with Percy Smith and H. Bruce Wolfe, she produced the famous *SECRETS OF NATURE* series, films remarkable not only



for their contribution to science, but for their special technique of fusing photo-micrography, field photography and dynamic editing motivated by conscious exploitation of pictorial values. "They brought to cinemas all over the world a revelation of the nature of plant and animal life which still today remains the outstanding screen experience of many cinemagoers. How often I have found in general discussion of the early days of the cinema that it is not the mention of *BEN HUR* or of an early appearance of Greta Garbo which rings the bell of memory but some still lurking image of 'one of those films showing how a plant grows'". (Roger Manvell: *Experiment in the film*).

By the early 30's she had become known as Britain's most distinguished woman director. She introduced moving diagrams developing their use in educational films, and produced such films as *THE KING'S ENGLISH*, the first film on language ever made, *THE TORTOISESHELL BUTTERFLY*, which won the Diplome d'Honneur at the International Cinema Festival at Brussels in 1935, *THE TOUGH 'UN*, winner of a

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gold medal in Italy in 1939, and MAIZE, which won a award at Cannes.

Mary Field and children's films.

Great strides were made in 1944 in connection with children's films. Mary Field inaugurated and became director of J. Arthur Rank's Children's Entertainment Films Department. This meant the launching of a great experiment, because nowhere else in the world, except in the Soviet Union, had an enterprise of this kind been undertaken. In October, she visited Canada to commission the first film for this group to be produced by the National Film Board: **THE BOY WHO STOPPED NIAGARA**. During the next six years she produced some hundreds of films for children, including the successful Australian production, **BUSH CHRISTMAS**. When the Rank Organization, as part of its retrenchment policy in 1950, gave up making children's films, Miss Field took up an appointment as a member of the Board of Film Censors. But the formation of the Children's Film Foundation, sponsored by the four trade associations of the British film industry — the producers, specialist producers, exhibitors and distributors — brought Mary Field back to the work she loved, and she became the Executive Officer of the new venture. Although mainly financed by the British Film Production Fund, a fund derived from the entertainments tax to assist production, it was necessary that the film should pay their way, and Miss Field broke new ground in her studies of audience reaction. Working with infra-red photography, she studied children in the cinema. Her findings have been published by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust in: **Children and films; a study of boys and girls in the cinema**, with photographs which show behaviour, facial expressions and gestures of children, the frame of the particular film scene and the photograph of the children taken at the same time being reproduced side by side.

What children want in films

Sir Bernard Heinze, the conductor found when inaugurating a series of children's concerts, that "Kids, with their natural taste and discrimination, are suckers for good music". Mary Field made the same discovery with children and films — and the number of children and young people who go to the cinema is undoubtedly far in excess of those who go to concerts and art galleries, or who read serious books.

She found, for instance, that children will not tolerate bad production, bad story-telling or, worst of all, bad acting; that children much prefer action to dialogue; that they like to be able to see, and to identify themselves with child actors on the screen and therefore like films in which children take a leading role; they have little interest in adults except, perhaps, the very old; all who would like to be respected by an audience of children, she says, must be under 30: "If you are a bad man, you can be middle-aged". They like animals in films and films with outdoor settings — "Few cowboys would be popular if deprived of their horses", — and they prefer exactitude and realism in plots and in the

behaviour of characters. Finally, children are more critical and logical than adults, and will spot inconsistencies more readily than adults — she tells of a formidable letter from a 7 year old boy at Hereford: "The maximum speed of a MG car is roughly 87 m.p.h., while that of a Jaguar is 135 m.p.h. So how did the MG pass the Jaguar?"

She has incorporated the results of this research into the films which have been produced under her guidance — films to which children throughout the world have responded so eagerly. She will illustrate her lectures in Canada with extracts from some of these productions.

Her influence has spread beyond her national boundaries by her visits to such countries as Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand, India, and in 1959, to Poland, lecturing and advising on the making of films for children and attending international conferences as an expert on this subject. Now as Chairman of the international Centre of Films for Children (Unesco), and Children's Programme Consultant to A.B.C. and A.T. V. Television Contracting Companies, her influence has spread into new and wider channels.

Mary Field has been honoured with the Order of the British Empire, and is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, the British Kinematograph Society, and the British Film Academy. She is a Past President of the British Federation of Business and Professional Women, Convenor of the Standing Committee on Cinema, International Council of Women; Chairman of the Film and Television Sub-Committee of the National Co-operating Body for UNESCO in the United Kingdom.

Her publications have included: **Secrets of nature** (with Percy Smith); **Cine biology** (with Percy Smith and J.V. Durden); **Boys' and girls' book of the film** (with Maud Miller); **See how they grow** (with Percy Smith and J.V. Durden); **Good company; Children and films**; and articles for educational, technical and instructional publications.

For those interested in taking advantage of the opportunity of hearing Miss Field, an outline of her tour is given below, with the name of the area co-ordinator who will be able to provide a detailed programme.

MONTREAL: Monday, April 18th. - Friday, 22nd. - W.S.G. Smele, United Kingdom Information Service, 1111 Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal.

QUEBEC CITY: Friday, 22nd. - Saturday, 23rd. R.F. Hope, United Kingdom Information Service, 100 d'Youville Square, Quebec.

HALIFAX: Sunday, 24th - Monday, 25th. Frank E. Murphy, Supervisor of Audio Visual Education, Department of Education, Box 578, Halifax.

ST. JOHN: Tuesday, April 26th. Mrs. Sidney Grosweiner, 1 Glenburn Court, St. John, N.B.

OTTAWA: Wednesday, 27th - Friday, 29th. Mrs. E. Barroclough, United Kingdom Information Service, 77 Metcalfe Street Ottawa.

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NEW MINIMUM SERVICE CHARGE

Effective May 1st, the minimum charge for any order of films from CFI will be \$2.00. This change will affect only those who order one ten-minute reel at one time.

This new minimum charge will be effective for all bookings made after April 1st for films to be shown after May 1st as announced in the last issue of the BULLETIN.

Sponsored films and films of the National Gallery collection will continue to be available free of charge.



COMMUNITY GROUPS SPONSOR CHILDREN'S TV PROGRAMMES

The Saskatoon Children's Film Library Committee have a remarkable record of service to the children of Saskatoon. For eight years, this committee assisted the theatre managers in presenting special children's shows on Saturday afternoons. This year the Committee turned its efforts towards a children's film programme on television. In a recent letter Mrs. Stanley Clark, Chairman of the Saskatoon Children's Film Library Committee described this programme. A full report will be distributed from the Canadian Centre of Films for Children in a future mailing.

"We have just completed a most successful fourteen week Saturday morning series of special shows for children over our local television station, CFQC-TV. The program included Heidi, My Friend Flicka, Black Beauty, Mother Carey's Chickens and other old favourites. We believe this type of programme is unique in Canada, and feel that it has tremendous possibilities on a national and international scale. Our programme was not a commercially sponsored programme but a widespread community effort. The amazing and gratifying financial support we received has allowed us to meet current expenses and we have some surplus with which to ensure continuation of this service to the children of Saskatchewan next year.

We have been overwhelmed by the success of our television programme, for the total response has gone beyond our wildest dreams. Over 800 letters have been received from enthusiastic viewers, living in some 175 town and rural communities of central and northern Saskatchewan. Our local station serves over 60,000 television homes providing an immense viewing audience. Hundreds of individual parents and children have sent voluntary contributions in support of our programme. From scores of community Home and School Association, Professional and Service Clubs, Church and Labour groups in Saskatoon and within a radius of 150 miles of the city, have come large and small donations. The Home and School Associations alone have sponsored more than five shows at a cost of \$180.00 for each programme. Four Saskatoon organizations—the Saskatoon Public School Board, the Saskatoon Elementary and Separate School Teachers, the Kiwanis and Kinette Clubs, each sponsored an individual Saturday morning television programme and representatives of these groups appeared on our programme with members of our own committee".

CANADA'S BEST FILMS

Selecting the ten, twenty or hundred best films is a game which many have played — from the critics at the Brussels World Fair to those who hopefully played in the recent Academy Awards contests.

The Canadian Library Association has played this game at least as seriously for the forthcoming joint Canadian-American Library Associations' Conference in Montreal (June 19-24). Following is the CLA's representative selection of the best Canadian films of the last 15 years. Some of these will be shown at the Conference and all will be available to delegates for private screenings at the National Film Board.

We were pleased to discover that all titles except one (Grey Cup Festival '58) are available through CFI.

SELECTED LIST OF CANADIAN FILMS BEGONE DULL CARE

National Film Board of Canada. 1949.

9 min. col

Painting directly on film Evelyn Lambert and Norman McLaren show a lively interpretation of the jazz music of the Oscar Peterson trio. Visual music.

CANADIAN PROFILE

National Film Board of Canada. 1956.

53 min. b & w

A portrait of the people of Canada of diverse origins and traditions facing the inroads of technology into every aspect of their life. From the fisherman of Newfoundland to the Kitimat power project runs the change, adjustment, adaptation of the Canadian people.

A CHAIRY TALE

National Film Board of Canada. 1957.

10 min. b & w

A fairy tale in the modern manner by Norman McLaren using his 'pixillation' animation technique, in which a young man tries to sit on a chair and it eludes him. Simple ballet, with musical accompaniment only.

CITY OF GOLD

National Film Board of Canada. 1957.

22 min. b & w

Nostalgic recollection of the period of the Yukon gold fever. Relics of the old Dawson City are used to picture the time when gold passed through its stores, taverns and dance halls.

CORRAL

National Film Board of Canada. 1954.

12 min. b & w

An original score, played on the guitar its the only accompaniment to this bit of visual poetry, which shows the roping and the riding of a high-spirited horse.

CORRELIEU

National Film Board of Canada. 1959.

20 min. col

A films tribute to Ozias Leduc, a Canadian painter, who became a legend in the Quebec countryside where he lived and worked.

CRAFTSMEN OF CANADA

Crawley Films for British American Oil. 1959.

26½ min. col

This film surveys the work of Canadian craftsmen in many fields, showing how the changing Canadian scene has been their constant in-

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piration and how business enterprise to-day uses the skills of the artisan to enhance the decor of building interiors.

FROM TEN TO TWELVE

Crawley Films Ltd. for National Film Board of Canada. 1956.

26 min. b & w or col.

Emotional and physical development of children ten to twelve years of age. Children of one family are seen at home, in school and at play. Conflicts are seen to be part of normal development into adulthood.

GREY CUP FESTIVAL '58

Chetwynd Films for Molson's Brewery. 1959.

40 min. col.

The highlights of the 1958 Grey Cup football game and the spirit of fun of the audience and the celebrators.

LIVING STONE

National Film Board. 1958.

33 min. b & w or col.

A personal exemplification of the spirit of art which underlies the work of Canadian Eskimo sculptors.

LOON'S NECKLAGE

Crawley Films for Imperial Oil. 1948.

12 min. col.

An Indian legend from the folklore of British Columbian Indians, depicted by masks which are treasures of the National Museum.

MAKING A DECISION IN THE FAMILY

National Film Board of Canada. 1957.

8 min. b & w

In the clash of wills or teen-age Eileen and her parents over her attendance at a party of her peers is exemplified the problem of parental discipline. The audience is left to mediate the question.

NEIGHBOURS

National Film Board of Canada. 1952.

9 min. b & w or col.

Using 'pixillation' technique, moving people and objects as though they were puppets, Norman McLaren produces a story of neighbours who fight over possession of a flower on the dividing line between their properties. Synthetic music and sound effects are the accompaniment.

NEWFOUNDLAND SCENE

Crawley Films for National Film Board of Canada. 1951.

45 min. col.

Colorful picture of the island province emphasizing the influence of the sea. Fishing villages around the shore, trans-island railroad, mines, pulp and paper mills farmland and the historic capital, St. John's. Sealing expedition and hunt for a fin-back whale. Winter dog-team transportation.

QUETICO

Christopher Chapman for the Quetico Foundation 1958.

22 min. col.

Sensitive study of the beauty of nature in Quetico Park in Northwestern Ontario. A lone modern voyageur canoes, camps, fishes across Quetico's vast expanse.

STRATFORD ADVENTURE

National Film Board of Canada. 1954.

40 min. b & w or col.

How a Canadian city of 19,000 bearing the name of Stratford developed the idea of creating a Shakespearean theatre. How a famous director was recruited, stars acquired and how the Stratford Shakespearean Festival became a reality.

THE STORY OF THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

National Film Board of Canada. 1959.

14 min. col.

The film describes the Seaway project from its conception to its memorable opening June 1959 by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth and President Eisenhower.

★★★★

ICFI.

We should like to express our gratitude to Alma Duncan of Dunclaren Productions for her generous assistance to CFI in designing the new letterhead.

The design which combines ICF. and CFI, reflects the Institute's expansion to provide direct service to the Institute's members and friends in western Quebec.

The new design will be adapted for a new masthead for the BULLETIN, for Special Film Lists and for other CFI publications.

MARY FIELD (concluded)

Let's Be at Home in the Water
TORONTO: Friday, 29th. - Wednesday, May 4th.
Wm. Bailey, United Kingdom Information Service, 119 Adelaide Street West, Toronto.

WINNIPEG: Thursday, 5th - Saturday, 7th.
B.R. Curson, United Kingdom Information Service, 504 Main Street, Winnipeg.

REGINA: Saturday, 7th - Sunday, 8th.
E.F. Holliday, Supervisor of Audio Visual Education, Department of Education, Regina.

EDMONTON: Sunday, 8th - Tuesday, 10th.
G. Cunningham, United Kingdom Information Service, 301 Imperial Bank Bldg., Jasper Avenue, Edmonton.

CALGARY: Tuesday, 10th. - Wednesday, 11th.
C.W. Carr, 1615 - 16th Avenue S.W., Calgary.

VANCOUVER: Thursday, 12th. - Sunday, 15th.
Miss T.G. Hunt, United Kingdom Information Service, 602 West Hastings Street, Vancouver.

This is followed by visits to Hollywood, New York, Washington and Jamaica.